

CREATING A CITY OF LEARNING:

Mayor Williams Vision for the District of Columbia Public Libraries



Mayor's Vision

A model Library for the Nation

Mayor Williams has embarked on an ambitious program to create a library renaissance in Washington. His vision is to

1. Overhaul the system to be state-of-the-art in the use of innovative and multi-media technology
2. Re-defined the system as a place that integrates learning, literacy and technology and function as a leader in addressing the crisis of adult illiteracy in Washington D.C.
3. Restructured to be a gateway to learning by providing access to the wealth of knowledge resident in the institutions of the nation's capital, such as the Smithsonian, National Geographic, the Library of Congress
4. Provide new library programs and new, or renovated, library buildings in every District community.
5. Use the library system as the portal to instill children with a love of books and reading.
6. Provide school age children with inspiring 21st century libraries where they can do their homework and research, and find a safe place outside of school to pursue learning.
7. Provide all adults, whether they are authors or learning to read for the first time, to look upon our libraries as their most treasured community asset.

The Opportunity

Use the library system as a tool to overcome illiteracy and invest in library programs that are exciting and relevant to the community

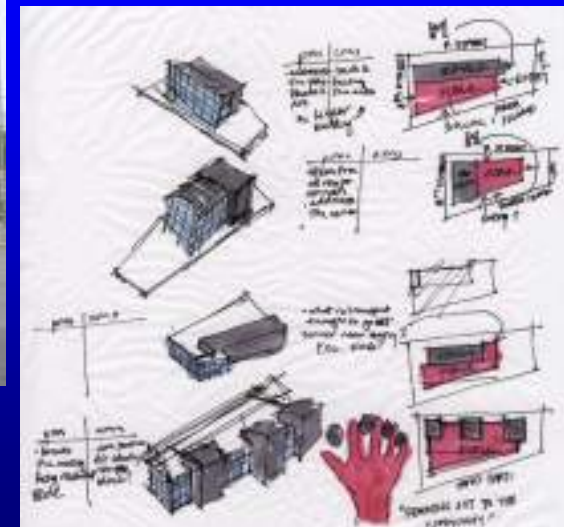
Key opportunities:

1. build a great new central library that serves and inspires DC citizens and anchors the city's new downtown center
2. Use the building of a new central library to revitalize the entire library system for new and renovated technologically advanced libraries
3. Engage the institutions on Washington DC, such as Smithsonian, national Geographic and Library of Congress in active partnership in the redevelopment of public libraries
4. Mount an aggressive fundraising campaign to support the Mayor's vision

The Power of Neighborhood Branches

Branch libraries will serve as neighborhood focal points for access to information, technology, and literacy programs.

- Equip with the latest computer access and learning through donations from foundations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Bank Foundation, the Kimsey Foundation
- Connect the information needs of schools, universities and the business community through creative programming and partnerships
- Create 8 new literacy centers in partnership with Fan Mae, Verison and Comcast
- Expand collections in Spanish, others need more programs that welcome teenagers.
- Expand hours and open seven days a week.
- Seek mixed-use development opportunities in neighborhood settings



The Power of a Strong Central Library

What a new central library can do for Downtown DC.

Promote Culture:

- High quality public spaces & buildings that strengthen city's cultural/civic identity

Contribute to Downtown Revitalization:

- A landmark & civic destination as part of a varied new mixed-use development area

Be Democratic & Inclusive:

- A destination that is oriented and accessible to all citizens
- Promote education and bridge the "digital divide"

Create Civic Gathering Spaces:

- Indoor cafes, technology & media access, and outdoor plaza and rooftop spaces

Promote Dynamic Programming:

- A 21st century media center -- with books, magazines, technology, photography, video, film series
- Strong community programming - theater and events, exhibitions, children's activities, book store



A Great Public Space Emerges



Mayor's Blue Ribbon Commission on the Future of the Washington, DC Public Libraries

“I think the health of our civilization, the depth of our awareness about the underpinnings of our culture, and our concern for the future can all be tested by how well we support our libraries.”

Carl Sagan

Charge to the Commission

Creating a vision for the 21st century library in Washington, DC

Primary Tasks

- Understanding our current challenges and priorities for change
- Shaping the creation of a redevelopment plan for the DCPL system (central library and neighborhood branches) with respect to the physical plant, the technology, the programming and the acquisition of new materials.
- Recommendations for implementing our plan.

Charge to the Commission

Creating a vision for the 21st century library in Washington, DC

Proposed Meeting Schedule

- Meeting #1: *Overview* December 8, 2004
- *Focus Group Sessions & Best Practice Tours* January/February
- Meeting #2: *DCPL System Redevelopment Approach* March
- Meeting #3: *DCPL System Draft Plan* June
- Meeting #4: *DCPL System Final Redevelopment Plan* September